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Lloyds Private Banking has examined the changing cost and affordability of private schools in Great Britain over the period 2004 to 2017. Data has been sourced from the Independent Schools Council (**ISC**) and the Office for National Statistics (ONS). **All figures relate to the average fees for a day pupil unless otherwise stated.** All earnings are sourced from the ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) and are based on estimated average annual earnings for full-time employees.

The cost of private education increases by over 20% in the last five years

- School fees have grown 21% over the past five years, almost four times faster than average earnings and 9% above inflation.
- Parents on an average UK salary would need to hand over 39% of their earnings to pay the average annual day fee of over £13,000
- Total cost of private school education from Reception to Year 13 costs an average of £152,906
- Northern parents are getting the best deal in the UK for private education, and are paying nearly a third less (29%) than Londoners.

The cost of private education has increased by more than a fifth in the past five years, far outstripping the rise in average earnings, according to latest research by Lloyds Private Banking.

Over the past five years, the average annual fee for day pupils has increased from £11,448 in 2012 to £13,830 - a rise of 21%. This is nine percentage points higher than the increase in the Retail Price Index (12%) and three and a half times more than the 6% rise in full time gross annual earnings (see table 2) over the same period.

The average annual private school fee in 2017 is now equivalent to over a third (39%) of the average UK annual gross full-time earnings of £35,148. This ratio was 30% in 2004 when this year's school leavers started reception.

Parents of school leavers in 2017 who started reception in 2004 have paid an average £152,906¹ in fees. During that time, parents have seen average annual fees go up by 67% from £8,297 in 2004 to £13,830 in 2017.

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The total average cost of a private school education in London, from reception to 18, is £176,301, the highest in Britain. London is followed by the South East (£171,042) and the South West (£156,120). Parents in the North² pay the least at £123,447 – around £53,000 less than in London. (Table 1)

Sarah Deaves, Private Banking Director at Lloyds Bank, commented:

"The choice of whether to send your child to a private school is an important one for many parents, but increasing fees means that even those on higher salaries may struggle to afford it. It's ever more important for parents, and sometimes grandparents, to plan their finances as early as possible if they want a private school education for their children."

School fees in London rise the most in last five years and are the most expensive

Regionally, London has seen the biggest rise in fees by 25% since 2012 to £16,560 – and is also the most expensive. The next biggest increase is in the North (23%) followed by East Anglia and the South East (both 21%).

The lowest average increases in annual fees since 2012 were in the South West (14%), followed by East Midlands (17%), Scotland and West Midlands (both 19%). The lowest average fees being seen in the North (£11,289) – a third lower than in the capital - and Scotland (£11,667). All regions now have average annual fees above £11,000.

Parents in London, who have sent a child to private school since 2012, will also have paid the highest in Britain – on average £89,802 – £28,746 higher than in the North (£61,056), the lowest. (Table 2)

A third of pupils receive financial assistance, with total value of contribution rising to £900m

An estimated 168,025 pupils currently receive help with their fees representing a third of all pupils⁴; the value of this help totals £900m, an increase of 4.9% on last year. A significant majority (85%) of total fee assistance is provided directly from the schools themselves: ISC schools currently provide more than £760 of fee assistance, an increase of 4.8% on the previous year.

Private school pupil numbers remain largely unchanged since 2012

Although the average fee has grown by 21% since 2012, pupil numbers remain largely unchanged compared to five years ago. While the number of senior school pupils (11 to 16) has fallen slightly (by 1%), pupils in the other age groups have increased. The number of sixth formers (17 to 19) has grown by 8%, children in junior school (4 to 10) have risen by 6% and those in nursery schools (0 to 3) by 4%.

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Table 1: Average Total Cost of a child at a Private School

Region	Total cost of a child at a private school 2012 to 2017	Total cost of a child at Private school from Reception (2004) to Y13 (2017)
Greater London	£89,802	£176,301
South East	£85,113	£171,042
South West	£78,210	£156,120
East Anglia	£77,217	£153,978
East Midlands	£69,969	£141,081
Wales	£67,347	£136,128
West Midlands	£65,913	£135,675
Scotland	£64,773	£131,337
North*	£61,056	£123,447
Great Britain	£75,861	£152,906

Source: ISC as at January 2017; * North includes the North West, North East and Yorkshire and the Humber

Table 2: Average Annual Private School Day Pupil Fees by Region 2004-2017

Region	2004	2012	2016	2017	1 Year % change	5 Year % change	13 Year % change
Greater London	£8,847	£13,296	£15,828	£16,560	5%	25%	87%
East Anglia	£7,866	£11,679	£13,563	£14,178	5%	21%	80%
South West	£7,896	£11,997	£13,767	£13,701	0%	14%	74%
South East	£9,063	£12,891	£14,904	£15,639	5%	21%	73%
North*	£6,627	£9,177	£10,722	£11,289	5%	23%	70%
East Midlands	£7,497	£10,821	£12,228	£12,651	3%	17%	69%
Wales	£7,290	£10,215	£11,844	£12,276	4%	20%	68%
Scotland	£7,170	£9,816	£11,310	£11,667	3%	19%	63%
West Midlands	£7,719	£10,032	£11,580	£11,979	3%	19%	55%
Great Britain	£8,297	£11,448	£13,341	£13,830	4%	21%	67%

Source: ISC as at January 2017; * North includes the North West, North East and Yorkshire and the Humber

Editors' Notes:

¹ Using the average day fee for each year from 2004 to 2017.

² North includes North East, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber

³ All earnings figures are sourced from the ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) survey and are based on estimated average annual earnings for full-time employees. ASHE data for 2016 has been uplifted by national average weekly earnings growth to calculate 2017 estimates.

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⁴ All pupils, not just day pupils.

Data Source for Private School Fees

The data for private schools fees is from the Independent Schools Council's (ISC's) annual census of its independent school members. The ISC publishes estimates of schools fees for all pupils in ISC associated private schools in the UK. ISC brings seven independent school associations together to represent over 1,300 independent schools (1,259 completed the census).

Annual school fees were calculated as three times the school fees per term. School fees were measured as at January of each year.

For further information

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